Week of February 17: MaineDOT Flash Facts
Topic: School Vacation Week

Opener:
-Many schools are closed this week for vacation. That means more kids walking and playing near streets, and more families traveling.
-Nearly 9,400 crashes occurred in February in Maine during the past three years.
-Because February is the shortest month of the year, some people may think the risk of crashes is reduced. In fact, crashes in February equal the monthly average for the rest of the year.
-Road conditions can often be a problem in February, and are an important factor in Maine's crash experience. Nearly 50% of the February crashes occur on snow, slush or ice covered roads and another 15% occur on wet roads.

Monday

Opener
It's school vacation week. That means many families are driving to Maine's recreational areas for a winter sports break. When we come back, we'll tell you how to avoid driving hazards that make February an especially tough month for safety.

Flash Facts
It's school vacation week and the MaineDOT wants to make sure you travel safely. But February can be a hazardous time, and not just because of road conditions. Visibility can be a real challenge as well. Dirt, sand and salt from the roads are constantly coating your car, making it hard to see and be seen. Here's a few hints.

- Fill your windshield washer and keep an extra gallon of washer fluid in the car. Running out of fluid in the middle of a trip is worse than inconvenient.
- Keep a rag in your car to frequently wash mirrors, headlights and taillights. Accumulated dirt makes it very difficult to see at night.
- Use window cleaner to clean the inside of your windows. Sun glare can be bad this time of year; and dirty glass makes it even worse.
- Turn on your lights anytime it's overcast or stormy so others can see **you.**
- Be a road model - keep your car's visibility top notch.

Wednesday

Opener
It's school vacation week and that means more children playing outside. The MaineDOT wants to make sure we take special precautions. After the break, we'll tell you why.

Flash Facts
It's the middle of school vacation week, and that means lots of children are out and about. The MaineDOT reminds us that this year's high snowbanks mean children who are playing close to the road are harder to see. Be especially careful near houses and playgrounds and watch for sudden movements. This is also the time of year when more people are walking in the road because many sidewalks are not cleared. As a driver,

slow down when pedestrians are near and allow extra room when passing in case they slip and fall. If you are walking, follow these instructions:

- Always walk facing traffic--it's the law. Walking facing traffic allows you to see what is coming.
- Make it your business to watch for cars. Poor visibility and slick road surfaces make drivers less able to react quickly.
- Always wear reflective or light-colored clothing so others can see you.
- Never use earphones to listen to music. You need to hear cars as well as see them.

Be a road model - drive and walk cautiously in winter.

Friday

Opener
Had enough of shoveling snow? If so, the MaineDOT has some words of advice for you after the break.

Flash Facts
It's the time of winter when many of us are getting tired of snow. At least, tired of shoveling it. But the MaineDOT reminds you that throwing snow back into the street is illegal -and dangerous for you. It creates a hazardous snow and ice zone right in front of your driveway, making it tough for vehicles to stop quickly. Keep your driveway snowbanks as low as possible to increase visibility, and follow these tips until they finally melt away.

- Pull out of intersections very slowly if snowbanks block your view - until you have unrestricted vision.
- Come to a full stop at stop signs.
- Be on the defensive for cars pulling out of driveways. They may not be able to see you until it is too late.

Be a road model: drive cautiously around snowbanks.

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